Contexts of Religious Tolerance:

New Perspectives from Early Modern Britain and Beyond

Christian Maurer (Université de Lausanne, Switzerland – ORCID 0000-0002-3996-5040);

christian.maurer@unil.ch;

Giovanni Gellera (Université de Lausanne, Switzerland – ORCID 0000-0002-8403-3170);

giovanni.gellera@unil.ch

Philosophy Department, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Abstract:

Abstract: This article is an introduction to a special issue on 'Contexts of Religious Tolerance: New Perspectives from Early Modern Britain and Beyond', which contains essays on the contributions to the debates on tolerance by non-canonical philosophers and theologians, mainly from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Scotland and England. Among the studied authors are the Aberdeen Doctors, Samuel Rutherford, James Dundas, John Finch, George Keith, John Simson, Archibald Campbell, Francis Hutcheson, George Turnbull and John Witherspoon. The introduction draws attention to several methodological points connected to the decision to look at the debates on tolerance through the prism of rarely studied authors. It then presents the essays, which offer novel perspectives by analysing and contextualising political, religious and moral treatments of tolerance. These are tied especially to debates on the articles of faith and on their status, on confessions of faith and their role in the quest for orthodoxy, on liberty of conscience, and on the relation between church and state.

Keywords:

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Christian Maurer and Giovanni Gellera

Philosophy Department, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

christian.maurer@unil.ch; giovanni.gellera@unil.ch

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1. Early modern tolerance: narratives and gaps

Most commentators will readily agree that tolerance was a central issue in the early modern period, especially in philosophy, theology, politics and law. Tolerance is here tentatively understood as non-intervention and enduring acceptance of certain objectionable differences on the basis of overriding reasons. These reasons consist in most cases in the pragmatic preference of a political state of peace and economic prosperity over the turmoil of war, or, arguably in much fewer cases, in principled considerations concerning virtue or justice.[1] The paradigmatic early modern context of debates concerning tolerance was undoubtedly religion: in the sixteenth century, the Reformation had confronted Europe with entirely new dimensions of conflict and war, which had repercussions for several centuries and provoked a broad range of responses, including theoretical defences of tolerance and, in some cases, political enactments of tolerance.[2] Debates on tolerance regarding religion predominantly concerned the question of how institutions such as the state and the church should deal with one another, with dissent and dissenters, and especially with so-called 'heterodox', 'heretical', or otherwise significantly different groups and individuals. In parallel to this more political angle, there was also the question of whether and how tolerance could be a moral virtue of an agent. This question was mainly seen through the prism of specific scriptural passages, recommending meekness and forbearance as a Christian virtue. If 'tolerance' and 'toleration' are sometimes distinguished (for example by treating the former as the moral virtue, and by reserving the latter for politics of non-intervention by the state), this distinction seems to have been neither systematic nor commonplace in the early modern Anglophone context, and it

should be further contextualised especially in a period when the Latin language, which did not make any such distinction, was still crucial for most larger intellectual conversations (see also Section 2).

Relatively few early modern thinkers dominate present-day general narratives and in-depth analyses of early modern theories of tolerance. Consider Rainer Forst's important book *Toleration in Conflict: Past and Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).[3] Forst presents an extensive philosophical history of the debates on toleration/tolerance from the Stoics and early Christianity to the twentieth century, and adds his own systematic account. As far as the early modern period is concerned, Forst pays most attention to the undoubted pillars of seventeenth-century debates on tolerance: Baruch Spinoza (quasi the paradigm of Dutch toleration theories and politics), John Locke (the paradigm of English toleration theories and politics – exemplified by the *Toleration Act* of 1689) and Pierre Bayle (the paradigmatic intellectual reaction to French politics of intolerance – exemplified by the revocation of the *Edit de Nantes* in 1685). As far as the Anglophone seventeenth century is concerned, Forst also pays attention to Roger Williams, Thomas Hobbes, William Penn and Jonas Proast, who penned at least parts of their theories of tolerance in English – but no other English, and no Scottish thinkers are mentioned. When it comes to the eighteenth century and the Enlightenment, Forst focuses on the situation in France and Germany, but he skips the post-Lockean intellectual landscape in England and Scotland. Needless to say, any more comprehensive history of the debates on tolerance will have to focus on some authors and leave out some others – any such history will thus leave us with blind spots. Yet these blind spots are precisely what the present issue wants to track, in an attempt to contribute new insights regarding less studied or even entirely unknown participants in the debates on tolerance in early modern Britain.

The contributors to this special issue are not the first to emphasise that too narrow a focus on a small number of well-explored classical figures engenders the risk of leaving us

with regrettable omissions in the broader history of the debates on tolerance, and of producing partial or even distorted views of the role of tolerance in the early modern intellectual discourse.[4] As far as Britain is concerned, here are some of the main gaps in the historiography of the debates on tolerance: regarding the seventeenth century, the focus on Locke and on some few other English and American thinkers has almost entirely eclipsed the debates for and against tolerance in Scotland. Similarly, the quite apposite presentation of Locke as one of the culmination points of the debates on tolerance in Britain, as well as the focus on eighteenth-century French and German debates on tolerance have drawn attention away from the British eighteenth century. Especially with the situation ensuing the *Toleration Act* of 1689, the continental perspective on Britain was that it was a forerunner in toleration politics. Did this enactment of comparatively tolerant political principles really lead to a relative absence in Britain of intellectual debates on tolerance, debates which can be found in eighteenth-century France centring around figures like Voltaire, or in eighteenth-century Germany around Moses Mendelssohn?

Comparing eighteenth-century Britain to eighteenth-century Continental Europe and to seventeenth-century Britain may cause the impression that post-Lockean Britain, there was a relative silence regarding tolerance. This impression may not be entirely false, yet we must note the presence of numerous debates on tolerance in Britain apart from the most famous ones. Furthermore, there were numerous intellectuals from Britain moving between geographical regions, countries and continents – as well as between religious denominations. Without any possible aspirations to completeness, this special issue brings together case studies on several such previously neglected figures, and in some cases even on undiscussed material from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain and beyond. It has the aim of offering some novel perspectives on selected philosophical and theological thinkers and their contexts, perspectives which may subsequently serve to fine-tune or question established narratives of early modern debates on tolerance.[5]

2. Comments on method

The title of this special issue suggests that arguments for and against religious tolerance are highly dependent on their contexts. The following metaphor, borrowed from Louisiane Ferlier's paper, may serve as a description of the general aim of this special issue: that of composing parts of a wider 'intellectual geography' of religious tolerance. This expression draws attention to the fact that arguments are situated in space and time: that the *when* and *where* are as important as who proposed a given argument, for what purposes, and for which audiences. Such considerations are especially true with respect to the highly sensitive debates on religious tolerance: Sir George Mackenzie (1636/38–1691) lamented that Confessions of Faith 'like ordinary Dyals, serve only for use in that one Meridian for which they are calculated, and by riding twenty Miles ye make them Heterodox.' (Mackenzie 1711, 85) The contributors to this special issue have thus paid particular attention to diverse contexts in which arguments for and against tolerance were conceived, expressed, exchanged, received, as well as modified. Before describing the most pertinent contexts in Section 3, some brief methodological considerations are in order.

A first methodological point concerns language. The English language is arguably unique in making the distinction between 'toleration' and 'tolerance', where the latter often seems to have a moral and psychological sense, and the former a political sense (as in the so-called *Toleration Act*). This distinction is today somewhat more established than in the seventeenth century, when the notion of forbearance was often used to refer to tolerance in the sense of the moral virtue. The Pauline Epistles in their Greek, Latin and English versions were central with their vocabulary to recommend to adopt a spirit of meekness (Gal. 6:1), to forbear one another in love (Eph. 4:2), and to forbear and forgive one another (Col. 3:13). In

Latin versions of the Bible, Paul's Greek term *prautês* was often rendered as *patientia*, *mansuetudo*, *lenitas* and *tolerantia*. And even if English was the main language of the authors discussed, Latin was doubtless very much part of their intellectual landscape. The wide dimensions of the outlined semantic field remind us that it is crucial to include the religious and moral background when analysing early modern debates on tolerance. In this special issue, the contributions by Burton, Gellera and Hutton are especially relevant when it comes to the connections between forbearance and tolerance, which are suggested by scriptural passages.

A second methodological observation concerns the potentially problematic consequences of the largely arbitrary temporal separation between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, which marks several histories of philosophy. The former is typically considered as characterised by religious strife, the entanglement of politics and religion, and the latter as the century of the secured possession of the peace and constitutional settlement reached after the so-called Glorious Revolution (1688). Often, histories of philosophy would have separate volumes on the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, while histories of theology have showed relatively little interest for the eighteenth century altogether.[6] This special issue tackles the practice of studying the two centuries as separate entities. Quite tellingly, scholars have increasingly debated this temporal division. In Scottish studies for example, 'the long seventeenth century' spans from the Reformation to the early Enlightenment, while some have suggested that the period is better delineated as the short seventeenth century between the two religious revolutions of 1638 and 1688/9 rather than the 'political' events of 1603 and 1707.[7] Eighteenth century scholars have, in turn, often reached back into the seventeenth century in their search for the origins of the Enlightenment.

On a related note, one should not ignore the word of caution by Harris and Garrett about identifying the eighteenth century with 'the Enlightenment': an essential part of 'the Enlightenment' was a wider dialogue with parts of society which were not necessarily

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'enlightened' in the sense of subscribing to the intellectual projects adopted by figures commonly counted amongst those of the Enlightenment.[8] A fruitful historiographical approach is proposed for example by Sarah Hutton, according to whom paying attention to what she calls 'philosophical conversations' helps to better grasp important continuities between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.[9] If only because several of the authors discussed here lived in both the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, this special issue provides case studies of intellectual conversations which connect these two centuries.

Clearly, this is not incompatible with acknowledging that century-specific research can provide important breakthroughs. This is especially true when the subject-matter is uniquely under-explored, and such was, and to a large extent still is, seventeenth-century Scottish philosophy. One example of a finally eroding prejudice is that seventeenth-century Scotland was a fundamentally backward nation whose Calvinism was 'grim and mean'.[10] Recent works have done much in the direction of uncovering the lively philosophical and theological developments in seventeenth-century Scotland.[11] This special issue contributes to this narrative from the so far little investigated perspective of religious tolerance.

Similar considerations apply to a third point: our dealing with geographical borders, especially the one between Scotland and England, which has sometimes produced divided historiographies. Some of the authors studied here, however, moved within Britain as well as beyond, to America, Italy, Turkey and the United Provinces. They found new intellectual contexts in the countries they moved to, and established a relation with them which was sometimes significant enough as to change them. But, already inhabited as they were, these new contexts also had the effect of changing some perspectives in the newcomers. Especially in the cases of Keith (Ferlier), Finch (Hutton), and Witherspoon (Foster), one sees the proper geographical sense of the aforementioned 'intellectual geography' of religious tolerance. A world traveller such as Keith brought with him his native Aberdeen and the tense debates about religion he witnessed there in his youth; but he also changed as he travelled to diverse

contexts, there and back again. Likewise, Finch enriched his views also thanks to his experience of the Italian and Ottoman societies, most different from his native England: however, as Hutton suggests, these experiences bore direct influence back in England on Finch's nephew, Daniel Finch, who was responsible for the *Toleration Act*. Witherspoon experienced how different the conditions for an 'established' church could be in Scotland and in New Jersey. Neither does the metaphor of the 'intellectual geography' lose its validity in the case of authors who did not travel much, since they usually transcended the specific perspectives of their native region: the Aberdeen Doctors (Denlinger) and Rutherford (Burton), for example, expressed their opposite positions regarding tolerance not only with Scotland, but also with England and their echoes in Europe in mind.

A fourth point concerns our attention to changes within and shifts between religious denominations. Virtually all of the authors investigated here witnessed at least one major confessional shift. James Dundas (Gellera), for example, grew up as a Presbyterian, went on to signing the National Covenant in 1639, served as an MP in the strongly Covenanting 1649-51 Scottish Parliament, but ended up excluded from public life for not complying with the Restoration anti-Presbyterian laws of 1661-63. In the quite unique case of Keith, several denominational shifts occurred in the very same person: we see him as a Presbyterian and Quaker in 1650s Aberdeen and in the American colonies, then returning to England and converting to Latitudinarian Anglicanism. During these confessional shifts, Keith maintained that his core beliefs were unaltered. By following the trails of these changes, both societal and personal, an even more complex portrait of early modern Britain's religious identities can be drawn: undeniably partisan and conflictual, but also at times surprisingly permeable and shifting. The movements of travellers also evoke the fact that, on the path to a new identity, they lived to varying degrees an uprooted or dislodged existence: not every new immigrant was the Principal of Princeton College, or the Ambassador of Britain to Italy and Turkey.

One further aim of this special issue has been to shed light on some relatively 'minor' authors, who may not have exerted much influence in their own time, and who are not widely studied nowadays. Yet the contexts of tolerance were also animated by such thinkers, who received, reinterpreted and sometimes perhaps misinterpreted the great arguments and views of their time. Focussing on the background of a picture in turn helps clarify what is in its centre. On account of the variety of contexts, our approach had to be interdisciplinary, combining theology, philosophy and intellectual history. The contributions leave the beaten track of the authors and sources typically investigated, in order to look into a wealth of 'minor' authors and sources (manuscripts, minutes, correspondences, sermons), which helps to collectively present a fuller picture of the early modern debates about religious tolerance.

3. Important contexts for arguments on tolerance

There are only a few treatises in early modern British philosophy and theology which are primarily dedicated to discussions of arguments for and against tolerance, and even fewer treatises indicating such a thematic focus in their very title. Famously, several of Locke's writings develop elaborate philosophical arguments in favour of tolerance –albeit a notoriously somewhat limited conception of it– and Rutherford's *Free Disputation Against Pretended Liberty of Conscience* (1649) presents theological arguments mostly against tolerance. Yet the scarcity of other treatises from Britain dedicated to tolerance may be thought to undermine the claim that tolerance was a central theme not only in early modern philosophical, theological and political debates on the Continent, but also in Britain. Once we shift attention to tolerance's immediate vicinity, however, we find numerous relevant debates, which sometimes do not even employ the typical vocabulary of tolerance. The contributions

to this special issue undertake such a shift in focus, and the following thematic contexts, which are often overlapping, emerge as most pertinent for the issue of tolerance.

First, arguments for and against tolerance frequently occupy important roles in theological debates on the articles of faith and their status, and in debates concerning the distinction between those articles of faith which ought to be considered essential or fundamental, and those which are merely non-fundamental or indifferent – the so-called *adiaphora*.[12] Deviations from the former were thought to constitute problematic forms of religious dissent, heterodoxies or even heresies, whereas disagreements on the latter were considered by many to concern less important aspects of faith, bearing no real weight when it comes to the one matter that really counts: salvation. So in principle, arguing that an article of faith is non-fundamental could imply that tolerating dissent on it is appropriate – but especially during the seventeenth century, the exact dividing line between *adiaphora* and essential articles constituted a constant battleground. Amongst others, the contributions by Denlinger on the Aberdeen Doctors, by Burton on Rutherford, and by Gellera on Dundas concern this theme.

Arguments concerning the status of the articles of faith often combined with more general concerns about confessions of faith, and about orthodoxy, heterodoxy and heresy. These concepts deeply marked the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Detailed confessions were drafted and imposed on the members of different churches. Especially the *Confession of Faith* drafted in the Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643–1647) is crucial for several papers in the present issue. In connection with the confessions, which cemented standards of orthodoxy, practices of subscription were enacted, theological committees founded, and public debates on specific articles of faith reached a high point. Yet then again, the confessions and tendencies to enforce orthodoxy and specific interpretations of scripture were themselves subject to criticism. Especially (but not exclusively) in the early eighteenth century, over-rigid concerns with confessions of faith were opposed. Philosophers as well as

theologians insisted that confessions were man-made fallible documents, and that the categories of orthodoxy, heterodoxy and heresy were too vague and too politicised to be tools for the advancement of faith.[13] Such criticisms went along with arguments in favour of tolerating at least certain forms of religious dissent, and sometimes even with arguments for a more general obligation of state and church to foster an open debate in order to advance humankind in religious matters. In this special issue, Burton focuses on Samuel Rutherford, who was one of the authors of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, and whose *Free Disputation against Pretended Liberty of Conscience* (1649) –profoundly critical of toleration– immediately followed his work on the *Confession*. The contributions by Maurer and Foster focus on the role of the *Confession* in eighteenth-century debates.

The theological distinction between essential and indifferent articles of faith, then, may also be interpreted as a distinction between what really matters when it comes to religious faith and salvation, and what is less important. And this latter distinction may be connected to debates about whether what really matters in religion is actually a core of morality, or the morally virtuous life more generally. Debates on this latter claim, which 'reduces' religion to morality, emerge to prominence in the eighteenth century, with various eighteenth-century philosophers as well as theologians famously arguing that we should be primarily concerned about living a life of charity, and not about being doctrinally orthodox.[14] Such a position may again encourage tolerance regarding at least certain differences in religious doctrine. By other thinkers, however, this idea was immediately repudiated and connected to heresies. Besides their obvious roles in eighteenth-century discussions –analysed in Stuart-Buttle's, Maurer's and Foster's essays–, the relation between religion and morality may also be seen to play a role in Dundas' attempt to situate public religion within a natural law framework, or in Keith's claim that a Christian core remained unchanged in spite of confessional shifts.

Famously, debates on liberty of conscience and its limits constitute another crucial context for arguments for and against tolerance – these debates appear in all contributions to

this special issue. Reformed theologians and philosophers emphatically insisted that there must be (some sort of) liberty of conscience. God alone was the lord of the conscience, and neither the Pope of Rome nor any other human institution could assume this position. However, the precise focus and extent of this liberty had always been a matter of heated dispute: was this liberty a genuinely individual liberty, as most famously argued by Pierre Bayle in his account of the rights of the erring conscience, or was it, rather, a liberty of a church, of an institution constituted by a body of believers and united by a confession of faith? The latter conception would be compatible with granting the church significant coercive power over its members. Which were, then, the competences of a church to delimit the liberty of the consciences of its individual members – especially of those who, by appealing to conscience itself, objected to specific articles of faith? Under which conditions was a church legitimised to use measures such as excommunication or coercion to preserve its unity? And in which form could religious education and subscription be justified?

A further question concerns the relation between church and state. In his later works on tolerance, Locke famously argued that the two are concerned with two entirely separate domains of our lives, and are thus not to interfere with one another. Besides this quite unique position, various opposing conceptions of how church and state were connected were theorised. This issue further connected with other debates, for example debates on the right of resistance to political power, on which institution –church or state– was to take the lead in religious education, and on whether toleration was really grounded in an individual right to liberty of conscience. Furthermore, the question of the possibility and the need for establishing a national church transcended the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as the contributions by Ferlier, Hutton and Foster demonstrate. Both Keith (Ferlier) and Witherspoon (Foster) had first hand experiences of the differences between Britain and America, and reacted to these in different ways.

4. The contributions and their perspectives

Aaron Denlinger investigates the complex positions on tolerable and intolerable tolerance, and thus on the limits of tolerance, developed by the so-called Aberdeen Doctors, a group of divines and academics active in Aberdeen until the Covenanter revolution. The Doctors set out to promote concord between Reformed and Lutheran churches both domestically and internationally on the basis of a shared core of fundamental doctrines, and of tolerance regarding less non-fundamental ones. Their views on tolerance are an inevitably complex attempt to foster agreement between confessionally close yet bitterly divided parties, and the opposition met by their proposals are a telling lesson about the difficulties of tolerance, both in principle and in practice.

Simon Burton looks at the *Free Disputation Against Pretended Liberty of Conscience* (1649) by Samuel Rutherford (c.1600–1661), a leading theorist of the Covenanter revolution and a member of the Westminster Assembly (1643–47). In conflictual Britain of the 1640s and 1650s, Rutherford makes the contentious point that all actions which undermine the unity of the church are intolerable. Therefore, a Christian has the religious duty not to forbear such actions. Burton sheds new light on Rutherford by exploring the roots in the conciliarist movement of his positions on conscience and resistance. In Burton's reading, Rutherford takes on the role of antagonist of contractualism, epitomised by Locke.

In his essay, Giovanni Gellera gives the first account of the *Idea philosophiae moralis* (1679) by the Scottish judge James Dundas, First Lord Arniston (c.1620–1679) on the subject of tolerance. As a Covenanter, Dundas went into home exile after the Restoration. The *Idea* is an incomplete manuscript in the tradition of Reformed scholasticism. Drawing from Scriptures, Stoicism, classical jurisprudence and his negative assessment of Hobbes, Dundas formulates a theory of duties in a strong natural law framework. Tolerance, with Pauline and

Stoic influences, is a virtue worthy of a Christian because it is a mark of a strong and hopeful character. The same moral and psychological attitude forms the ground for a political dimension of tolerance, applicable to law-abiding Christians. The limits of tolerance would then be the infractions of the main duties towards god, self and others, as expressed in the natural law.

In her essay on Sir John Finch (1626–1682), Sarah Hutton also tackles previously unstudied territory. The English-born anatomist, diplomat and materialist Finch, who was in some respects close to Henry More (1614–1687), lived most of his life in Italy and Turkey, and thus got acquainted with various geographical, cultural and religious differences. More claims that liberty of conscience forbids Christians to persecute and should even make us examine our own religious principles. Finch's discussion of liberty of conscience, as expounded in his unpublished notebooks, emphasises the importance of conforming to one's 'inner principle'. His broad understanding of this point, and his account of the limits of political and ecclesiastical power on individual conscience seem marked by his international experience. His criticism of the Catholic church is combined with a fascination for its high level of civility, which has Roman and thus pre-Christian roots. The family ties between John Finch and Daniel Finch, who was responsible for the *Toleration Act*, suggest that there may at least have been remote links between their ideas.

In her essay, Louisiane Ferlier recounts and analyses the intellectual and geographical journeys of George Keith (1639–1716). Keith was a pamphleteer, a religious proselytiser and a convert to Presbyterianism, Quakerism, and Latitudinarian Anglicanism. His life and travels covered Scotland, the United Provinces, the American colonies and England. Influenced by Henry More on tolerance and by Quakerism on immediate revelation and pacifism, Keith became a strong advocate of liberty of conscience and toleration, which he considered as necessary for the defence of the Protestant faith. He held firm to these beliefs across the many changes of confessions and places which make his life so remarkable. Ferlier argues that

Keith represents a fitting case study of how different geographical loci can shape ideas of toleration, and how his message and strategies adapted to new audiences and challenges.

In his essay on the Scottish theologian and philosopher Archibald Campbell (1691–1756) and his connections with seventeenth-century theories of natural law, Tim Stuart-Buttle connects debates on tolerance with early modern theories of recognition. Stuart-Buttle contextualises Campbell's reaction to Hobbes' claim that our desire for recognition by others causes conflicts and war, and that hence political authority is required to create a context in which mutual recognition and tolerance is possible. Campbell builds on the natural law theorist Richard Cumberland (1631–1718), and emphasises that our natural desire for esteem or recognition may be corrupted in civilised societies, if religious opinions are bestowed with secular advantages. Toleration regarding disagreement becomes necessary only if political and ecclesiastic powers become entangled to enforce conformity to religious doctrines. Otherwise, the natural economy of esteem will engender mutual charity and forbearance.

In his essay on the debates on tolerance in early eighteenth-century Scotland, Christian Maurer argues that the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, penned from 1643 until 1647, which was reintroduced in the 1690s as the official creed of the Church of Scotland, occupied an ambiguous role. The *Confession* asserted liberty of conscience in anti-Catholic contexts, yet it imposed rigid boundaries on this liberty in order to preserve the unity of the Kirk. In early eighteenth-century arguments for and against tolerance regarding doctrinal issues, both poles were used: the orthodox Committee for Purity of Doctrine accused theologians such as John Simson (1667–1740) and Archibald Campbell (1691–1756) of heresies, who defended themselves by insisting on passages in the *Confession* granting liberty of conscience. Philosophers such as George Turnbull and Francis Hutcheson argued for giving preference to the state in religious education.

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* appears again as a central document in James Foster's essay. Foster describes the development of John Witherspoon (1722–1794), who is

best known as the author of the *Ecclesiastical Characteristics* (1753), a satirical pamphlet directed against the members of the so-called Moderate Party in the Kirk, decrying them as followers of Shaftesbury and the Stoics rather than of Jesus. When becoming president of the College of New Jersey in 1768, Witherspoon contributed to amending the *Confession of Faith*, arguing now for a strong separation between state and church, and opposing the establishment of a national church in the American context. Foster argues that Witherspoon is in favour of liberty of conscience, and, with his opposition against the establishment of a national church, aims at preventing the state from using the church as a tool for political domination.

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[1] For the distinction between toleration as mere practice vs. principled doctrine, see famously Williams, 'Toleration: An Impossible Virtue?'. For the relevance of this point in the early modern period, see e.g. the underlying historical narrative in Forst, *Toleration in Conflict*, 26–32, and in other relevant sections, as well as Domínguez, 'Introduction', 278f. Various commentators emphasise the limited importance in the early modern period of theoretical arguments for the realisation of toleration in politics. In many cases, they are right.

[2] Only occasionally were there debates on tolerance regarding non-religious phenomena. One particularly interesting example is Bernard Mandeville's highly controversial defence of a tolerant stance regarding prostitution in his *A Modest Defence of Publick Stews* (1724).

[3] This study was first published in German as *Toleranz im Konflikt. Geschichte, Gehalt und Gegenwart eines umstrittenen Begriffs* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, 2003), and then translated and included in the *Ideas in Context* series.

[4] This is not the place for an extensive review of the existing literature on British figures outside the established narratives on tolerance, but some important studies should be

mentioned: the contributions in Haakonssen, *Enlightenment and Religion* deal with matters of dissent and tolerance mainly in the English eighteenth century. The essays in Savage, *Enlightenment and Religion* address the topic of tolerance in various British eighteenth-century contexts, and the contributions to Domínguez, *Religious Toleration in the Age of Enlightenment* cover several rarely studied early modern British figures. Bejan, *Mere Civility* offers new insights on Williams, Hobbes and Locke on toleration through the prism of the concept of civility.

[5] There are, of course, various remaining regrettable gaps concerning British thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Examples from the seventeenth century include George Mackenzie's philosophical essays on religion and Robert Williams' writings. The English Deists and their contributions to the debates on tolerance have received a considerable amount of attention, yet the links between Scotland and Ireland in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century remain to be further explored. In the eighteenth century, Bernard Mandeville's account of toleration regarding religious and non-religious matters would deserve more attention, and the same holds for John Price's and William Priestley's accounts of religious dissent later in the English eighteenth century.

[6] Good examples are the *Cambridge History of Philosophy* and the *Cambridge Companions* series, which typically have substantially different editors and contributors from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. In theology, volume 2 of the *The History of Scottish Theology* edited by David Fergusson and Mark Elliott is, quite uniquely, entirely dedicated to the eighteenth century.

[7] See Adams and Goodare, 'Scotland and its Seventeenth-Century Revolutions'.

[8] See for example the discussion of John Witherspoon's *Ecclesiastical Characteristics* in Garrett and Harris, 'Introduction', 3.

[9] See Hutton, 'Intellectual History and History of Philosophy', 935 ff.; *British Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century*, 222–225.

[10] Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*, 190.

[11] Hutton *British Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century*, the issue of *History of Universities XXIX/2* on seventeenth-century Scottish university philosophers, guest edited by Alexander Broadie, *Reformed Orthodoxy in Scotland: Essays on Scottish Theology 1560–1775* edited by Denlinger 2017, vol. 1 of *The History of Scottish* Thoelogy, edited by David Fergusson and Mark Elliott 2019, and the forthcoming *Scottish Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century*, edited by Alexander Broadie.

[12] The concept of *adiaphora* has a long history in European thought. Early modern discussions on this concepts were especially influenced by Erasmus – see for example Forst, *Toleration in Conflict*, 103–108.

[13] Already in 1663, George Mackenzie undermined the validity of the concepts of orthodoxy and heresy by complaining that 'it is remarkable, that albeit Infallibility be not by all conceded to any Militant Church, yet it is assumed by all.' Mackenzie, *Moral Essays*, 35).

[14] See several discussions on the subject in Ahnert, *The Moral Culture of the Scottish Enlightenment*, esp. 37–45.